

# *THE SCARY GHOST*

*HAL AMES*



Michael and Emma Rydell were excited to be moving to the countryside. They had lived in the city all their lives, so moving to the farm was going to be an adventure; only what happened was not what they were expecting.

Their children Jimmy and Sandy were not happy about the move. They would be leaving their friends and everything they had known behind.

Dust flew up behind the car as they drove up the long driveway. In front of them was a big old house. They had done a lot of work to make it look better. It had new paint and some repairs to the roof. They were happy the house was theirs.

The first day in their new house was tiring. Unpacking and finding where things needed to go took more time than they thought. There were many things they had to leave for the next day. Dinnertime in the house was quiet. No one felt like talking.

After dinner, they sat in the living room and watched a movie, which helped them to relax.

After the movie the children headed to bed for their first night in the house.

Jimmy's room was in the corner of the house, so he had windows on two walls. He could look out over the entrance to the house and see when people were coming. And from the other window, he could see the garden with the swing hanging from a tree. Their dog William slept on the floor next to his bed on a big rug, just

like in the old house.

Sandy's room was at the back of the house. From her windows the light from the orange setting sun came through as it dipped below the rows of corn.

Before going to bed, Emma and Michael sat on the front porch and listened to the crickets chirping. The open night sky was bright with more stars than they had ever seen before. It was quiet and relaxing.

They had gotten a really good price for the farm, much better than anything else they had looked at.

They sat together for a long time talking about the plans they had for the farm. They wondered why no one had bought the house before them. It wouldn't be long before they found out why.

In the middle of the night, when everyone was sleeping, William began to bark. He wouldn't stop, even when Jimmy yelled at him. He kept barking at the door.

When Jimmy opened the door, his family was already out of their rooms wondering why William was barking so loudly.

William ran out of the room and stopped at the top of the stairs barking at something below. Then he stopped, turned and went back to the room, laid down and went back to sleep.

Everyone looked at each other wondering what had just happened. William had never done that before.

Michael went down the stairs quietly to see if everything was alright. The family stood at the top of the staircase listening for anything unusual.

Michael informed them, "The doors are locked, and the windows are closed. Nothing seems to be out of order. Everything appears to be okay, but I wonder what got the dog so worked up. Maybe it was a squirrel or something."

Since it was now quiet, they went back to bed.

The next morning when they got up, they were surprised to see that the boxes

they had unpacked were now repacked. The things they had put in the kitchen were now back where they started, in the boxes.

“What’s going on? I thought we put those things in the drawers yesterday,” Emma said, very confused.

“I’m sure we did that,” Michael agreed.

The children laughed.

Jimmy said, “I think you might have dreamed that. How could those boxes be full again?”

No one could answer the question.

Emma and Michael put the things away again, while Jimmy and Sandy cleaned their rooms and unpacked their boxes.

After lunch, they went to see the horse they had gotten from the neighbor. The horse’s name was Brandy. William went with them. He chased some squirrels up the tree. He barked at them and then he began to run in circles.

“Is William chasing his tail?” Sandy laughed.

They walked to the barn and went to the stall where the horse was put the day before. Brandy came to the door and greeted them with a whinny. Sandy stroked her face and gave her an apple she brought from the house. Brandy chewed it quickly.

“Do you want to go for a ride?” Sandy asked Brandy.

“Let me get the saddle and bridle and then we can take her to the pasture,” Jimmy suggested.

Brandy did not want to leave her stall. She pulled back and wouldn’t let Jimmy put the bridle in her mouth.

“That’s weird. She was fine yesterday. Maybe she’s not happy here. Let’s come back later when she has settled down,” Jimmy said.

They went back into the house. They noticed that their parents were still unpacking and deciding where things should go.

“Can we help?” they asked.

Michael gave them chores to do.

Jimmy was asked to clean the floors in the hallway and the living room, while Sandy was asked to clean the dining room.

“If we work hard and work together, we will finish this in no time. Then we can go to town to buy some groceries. While we are there, we can get some ice cream. How does that sound?” Emma asked.

“Great!” they said together.

The family got into the car and drove to the town, which took about fifteen minutes.

As they entered the town they saw a sign that said, ‘Welcome to Andyville’.

Living close to a small town was new to them. There weren’t many stores and only one cinema. In the middle of the town was a single stoplight.

The grocery store was just past the light.

They parked the car and got out. The town was like what they had only seen in the movies. It was fun to walk up and down the streets looking into the windows.

When they went into the grocery store, they went down the aisles looking at the novelty things they had for sale. There were small toys, candy in glass jars, games, hats, and even boots.

When they paid for the food, the clerk asked them, “Are you new in town?”

“Yes, we just moved into the old Murphy place west of town yesterday. We had a lot of work done on the house and it’s really nice,” Emma answered.

“The Murphy farm?” she was surprised.

“Yeah, the Murphy farm. So far, we like it just fine,” Michael spoke up.

“Nobody has lived out there for years. There are a lot of stories about that place. Have you heard any of them?” the clerk asked.

“Nope, we haven’t heard a thing,” Emma responded.

“Some people say the place is haunted. That is why the last family moved out. No one has wanted to live there since. I’m surprised that you weren’t told about this,” she informed them.

“Ha, we don’t believe in ghosts,” Michael chuckled. “There’s no such thing as ghosts.”

“Well, you will find out soon enough. Good luck!” the clerk said as she handed them their grocery bags.

Jimmy and Sandy laughed about what the clerk had said.

“Wow, wouldn’t it be cool if the house was really haunted? We could tell our friends back home all about it,” Sandy said.

“I bet they wouldn’t believe us, even if it were true,” Jimmy laughed.

The ride home went by quickly and when they got to the house they took the groceries to the kitchen, and to their surprise all the boxes were full again.

“What’s going on here? I would have to say that someone wants us to get out of here. That is NOT going to happen!” Michael said, very angry at whoever was doing this to them.

“Do you think the clerk was right? Do you think this place is haunted?” Jimmy asked, while looking around the room.

“I don’t care if the place is haunted, we are not going to leave!” Emma said in a loud voice.

She looked up at the ceiling and spoke to the air, “If you are a ghost, we don’t care! We are not leaving!”

Suddenly the dog began to bark at the door to the kitchen. Michael ran over to the door and pushed on it, but it did not move.

**“Come here and help me!” Michael yelled over to his family.**

They pushed on the door and then all of a sudden it flew open and they fell on the ground on top of each other.

William was still barking at something in the living room.

When they looked up, in the middle of the room, was someone they had never seen before. He was laughing at them.

“WHO ARE YOU?” Michael screamed.

“This is MY house. You need to get out of here NOW!” the stranger said to them.

William ran over to the man, but when he tried to bite him, his mouth didn't find anything. It was like nothing was there.

“Do you think you scare me?” asked Michael.

A loud sound shook the house. Jimmy and Sandy fell to the floor with their mother. They held onto each other.

Michael stood up to the stranger. He did not budge.

“You have to do better than that!” Michael yelled. “We bought this place and we are not leaving!”

“I want you to leave. I have scared away many people before you. You don't want me to make your life miserable, do you?” the stranger in the living room tried to scare Michael.

“Bring it on. We can handle whatever you try to do. I know you can't hurt us!” Michael retorted.

The man disappeared.

“Dad, was that really a ghost?” Jimmy asked, while still sitting on the floor.

“There is no such thing as a ghost, I told you that,” Michael answered.

“SO, what *was* that?” Emma asked.

“I'm not sure. Maybe someone is trying to play a joke on us. Whatever it is we can figure it out. I'm sure of it. For the time being, just let it do what it wants, and don't let it know that you are scared,” Michael instructed his family.

“Not be scared? How do we do that? That thing made me so scared, I almost

wet my pants,” Sandy spoke up.

The rest of the day was quiet. They decided to leave the boxes packed for a while since they knew they would have to unpack again because of what had happened before.

That night, after they fell asleep, there were loud sounds coming from the first floor. When they went down to see what the noise was, they found the house a mess. Everything from the boxes was scattered on the floor.

“Well, I guess that idea didn’t work,” Emma stated. “I guess we can’t win when it comes to our things. What should we do?”

“Let’s clean up the mess,” Michael suggested. “After we are done, I will sleep down here, and if he comes back I will talk to him, okay?”

It took an hour to clean the room, and then Michael did as he said he would. He took a blanket and lay down on the couch.

In the morning, nothing more had happened.

“Maybe I need to sleep down here every night,” Michael offered.

It was Saturday.

Emma made pancakes and sausage for breakfast. The smell carried up the stairs to kid’s rooms. They came running down to eat.

To their surprise, the stranger was standing in the living room again, and he was making strange noises. He sounded like a seal, then like a lion, then like a chicken, and then like mule. The kids laughed at him.

“Why are you laughing?” the stranger asked.

“You sound just like a zoo,” Sandy laughed as she talked.

He then made an ugly face and smoke came out of his mouth.

Again, the children just laughed at him.

“Aren’t you afraid of me?” he asked.

“Not really. You’re funny. We like you,” Jimmy answered.

“Nobody likes me! I hate it when people like me!” he then vanished in a puff of smoke.

“That was cool! Our friends won’t believe it when we tell them about this,” Jimmy commented.

“They will never believe us. They will think we are making a story. I think we should just keep this in the family,” Sandy suggested.

After breakfast, they decided to straighten up the house again, knowing that it would probably get messed up once more, but it kept them busy.

In the afternoon, Jimmy and Sandy went to the barn to visit Brandy again. They had to clean her stall, which they did not want to do, but it is part of life on a farm.

Sandy brushed Brandy just the way she had been taught by the old owners. She seemed to like it a lot.

They fed the chickens, and cleaned the chicken coop. They found eleven eggs and took them to their mother.

Their mother was in the kitchen and she was angry.

“What’s wrong, Mom?” Sandy asked.

“Nothing is working. The stove won’t fire, the water won’t run, the refrigerator is off! Nothing is working!” she answered very frustrated.

Michael walked in while she was telling the children what was going on at the moment.

Michael yelled, “OK, knock it off. We get it, but we are not going to leave! If you don’t stop, we will get someone out here who can make you leave. We will get the Ghostbusters and they will take care of you!”

A voice came from out of nowhere, “GHOSTBUSTERS?! NO! Don’t call the Ghostbusters. I will try to be nice.”

“That’s better,” Michael answered.



Everything began to work again.

Michael asked, "Can we talk, please?"

The stranger appeared in the middle of the kitchen.

"What do you want to talk about?" he asked.

Michael wanted to bargain with the stranger.

"Are you really a ghost?" he asked.

"Yes, I died here two hundred years ago in an Indian raid on my farm," he answered. "Since then I have been stuck here with nothing to do. It is fun when I can scare people, but you are the first ones who moved here who aren't afraid of me."

"How do you know about the Ghostbusters then?" asked Jimmy.

"A family that lived here many years ago, watched a movie about the Ghostbusters. They threatened to call them, but I scared them out before they could call. I believe you when you say you will call them. Please don't. I don't want to become a green blob."

"What is your name?" Michael asked.

"My name is Henry Farnsworth. I'm originally from Boston, but I moved here to start a new life," he answered. "There were problems and the Indians got angry. My family got away, but I wasn't so lucky."

Henry and the family made an agreement to live in the house together. It worked out really well. The ghost entertained the children and when guests came to the house to visit, the ghost would do things to make them scared. Then everyone had a story to tell when they left.

After that, no one believed that the house was really haunted, but on Halloween, the ghost made it a lot of fun.

**VOCABULARY** (*Match the word to its definition*)

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. aisle _____     | a. halter, way to control a horse         |
| 2. groceries _____ | b. top of room, where the light is        |
| 3. haunted _____   | c. frighten, make afraid of               |
| 4. ceiling _____   | d. row in a store or plane, where to walk |
| 5. stall _____     | e. having a ghost, spooky                 |
| 6. bridle _____    | f. unhappy, depressed, gloomy             |
| 7. bark _____      | g. food from a grocery store              |
| 8. scare _____     | h. rooms for animals inside of a barn     |
| 9. miserable _____ | i. sound from a dog                       |
| 10. budge _____    | j. move a little bit                      |

**TRUE OR FALSE**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. The dog's name was William.                   | T / F |
| 2. The family were afraid of the ghost.          | T / F |
| 3. The ghost's name was Johnny.                  | T / F |
| 4. The ghost helped to clean the house.          | T / F |
| 5. Sandy rode Brandy to town.                    | T / F |
| 6. Sandy and Jimmy found twelve eggs.            | T / F |
| 7. William chased some squirrels.                | T / F |
| 8. The farm grew lettuce and carrots.            | T / F |
| 9. The ghost was taken away by the Ghostbusters. | T / F |
| 10. Jimmy and Sandy had many chores to do.       | T / F |

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The name of the town was what? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Johnville
  - b) Andyville
  - c) Murphyville
  - d) Michaelville
  
2. What was the name of the horse? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) William
  - b) Sandy
  - c) Brandy
  - d) Candy
  
3. What did they buy when they went to the town? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) boots
  - b) novelties
  - c) toys
  - d) groceries
  
4. What was the name of the ghost? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Henry
  - b) Willy
  - c) Carson
  - d) Murphy

**COMPREHENSION:** *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What was the name of the town?

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2. What could Jimmy see out of his window?

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3. What happened to the things that had been put away in the kitchen?

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4. Who told them the house was haunted?

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5. What did Emma say she would buy for the children?

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6. What did Michael and Emma see in the sky at night?

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7. Who brushed Brandy?

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8. Who tried to put the bridle into Brandy's mouth?

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9. What kinds of things were in the grocery store?

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10. What happened to Henry that made him a ghost?

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